Rajahmundry Airport

1409. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government will find ways and means to make better utilisation of small airports like Rajah mundry Airport in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, what are the plans of Government to encourage airlines to serve smaller towns having access to airports?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATOIN AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) The airport at Rajahmundry is suitable for operations of HS—748 aircraft. Due to commercial and operational reasons, Vayudoot Limited had discontinued its operations from Rajahmundry airport. National Airports Authority has no immediate plans to improve this airport due to the lack of demand from airline operators.

Land acquired for txpansion of Bhubaneshwar Airport

1410. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY. Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the total land aquired for the expansion of Bhubaneshwar Airport;

(b) the compensation paid to the persons whose land has been acquired; and

(c) the steps taken for the expansion of Bhubaneshwar Airport?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATOIN AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) The State Government has aquired approximately 70 acres of land and handed it over to National Airports Authority.

(b) The land had been acquired by the State Government of Orissa. National Airports Authority do not have the details of the compensation paid.

(c) Bhubaneshwar airport is being developed as model airport. The Plan includes extension of runway to 9000 ft. and construction of a terminal building at a cost of Rs. 24.24 crores.

Proposal for developments of Buddhists places in the country

1411. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to develop the places of Buddhist tourist interest in the country;

(b) if so, the places of Buddhist tourist interest identified, so far;

(c) the funds earmarked therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to develop Lalitgiri, Udaygiri and other places of Buddhist tourist interest in Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) With a view to develop important Buddhist Centres in the country as tourist destinations, two Task Forces were appointed by the Government which recommended 53 Buddhist Centres to be developed in a phased manner. These included the Buddhist Centres located in the States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar namely, Vaishali, Bodhgaya, Nalanda, Rajgir, Sarnath, Piparhawa and Saravasti and Ajanta and Ellora in Maharashtra. Government have also entered into a loan agreement with the Overseas Economic Cooperation

Fund of Japan in December, 1988 for development of infrastructural facilities along the identified Buddhist Tarvel Circuit in U.P. and Bihar. In January, 1992 for conservation and development of Ajanta and Ellora in Maharashtra Govt. further entered into a Loan Agreement with OECF. The OECF would extend financial assistance to the tune of 9.244 billion Japanese Yen.

(c) An amount of Rs. 2.00 crores has been earmarked during the year 1994-95 for development of places of Buddhist interest.

(d) No proposal has been received from the State Government of Orissa for development of Lalitgiri, Udaigiri and other places of Buddhist tourist interest in Orissa.

Tie-Ups with Foreign Airlines to Share Traffic

1412. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what are the plans of Government to modernize the Air India fleet and by when;

(b) whether there is any proposal to enter into any tie-ups with some of the foreign airlines to share traffic; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) Air India has recently inducted four new generation B 747-400 aircraft in its fleet. Air India proposes to acquire two 400 seater aircraft in 1996 and 1997. Modernisation of fleet is an on-going programme and investment decisions will be taken after weighing various pros & cons.

(b) and (c) Air India has joint venture agreements with Zambian Airways, Air Mauritius, Malaysian Airlines and Gulf Air with a profit sharing formula.

Air India has also concluded Block seat arrangements with Ethiopian airlines and Finnair under which Air India is provided certain number of seats either free of cost or at reduced rates.

Air India is also negotiating similar block seat arrangements with Air Malta and Air Canada.

Foreign Visits Made by Minister and Officials

1413 SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: DR. BAPU KALDATE:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) how many times the Minister and officials in the Ministry visited foreign countries (with names of the countries) during 1995 and 1994 till date to promote tourism in the country;

(b) what is the expenditure incurred on each of the tour undertaken; and